

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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STATUS OF ENDANGERED SPECIES LISTED BETWEEN 1969-75 UNDER REVIEW BY INTERIOR

Are the California condors, whooping cranes, cheetahs, Nile crocodiles, and Galapagos tortoises still endangered? Should the Eskimo curlew, the blue pike, and the Asian wild ass come off the endangered list because they may be extinct?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking answers to these questions in a status review of 382 species that were classified as endangered or threatened prior to 1975. The review by the Interior agency, announced in the May 21, 1979, Federal Register, could result in proposals to transfer species from one classification to another, to remove some entirely, or to change critical habitat designations.

The U.S. list of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants presently includes 694 native and foreign species, all of which must be reviewed at 5-year intervals. The mandatory 5-year review was imposed by the 1978 amendments to the Endangered Species Act. The National Marine Fisheries Service of the Department of Commerce is conducting a similar review of the endangered marine mammals under its jurisdiction.

Endangered means that a species is presently in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, while the threatened classification means that the species is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future. Critical habitat is the specific area of air, land, or water that is essential for the species' conservation.

The primary threat to wildlife and plants worldwide is habitat destruction, followed by the demand for commercial, sporting, scientific, or educational purposes. Disease, predation, inadequate protective laws, and other natural or man-made factors also contribute to many species' decline.

The Service solicits substantive comments with supporting documentation on the species' numbers, distribution, threatening factors, and critical habitat. Comments should be submitted no later than August 20, 1979. Additional information and a list of the species under review may be obtained from the Director (OES), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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